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ABSTRACT

This report on safety in Minnesota's secondary and postsecondary schools assesses and evaluates the impact of existing laws and programs on school safety and anti-violence and recommends changes in law or policy to increase safety and curb violence. The report is based on a 1995-97 survey of postsecondary students, interviews with campus security directors, and information from campus law enforcement administrators. The report makes the following recommendations: all postsecondary institutions should implement basic safety measures, including regularly patrolled campus routes, escort services, and crime prevention classes; campus safety officials should involve students in development of crime prevention initiatives; institutions should provide sexual assault awareness and prevention programs and make victim assistance services available; postsecondary institutions should recognize and address alcohol and drug abuse and its relationship to crime; crime reporting procedures should be improved throughout the state; campus and community relations should be improved; minimum professional standards should be established for hiring and training of safety and security personnel; campus security departments and local law enforcement agencies should develop and maintain communication protocols to ensure that relevant safety and security information is exchanged; and access to criminal, motor vehicle, and applicable state and federal databases should be made available to campus security directors. (MKA)

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Final Report
1999 Post-Secondary Safe Schools

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Executive Summary

This report was developed by the Attorney General's Office on school safety in Minnesota's post-secondary institutions. The report was prepared pursuant to the 1995 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 226, Article 3, Section 1, which provides:

> *On or before January 15 of each year, the Attorney General shall prepare a report on safety in secondary and post-secondary schools. The report must include an assessment and evaluation of the impact of existing laws and programs on school safety and anti-violence and include recommendations for changes in law or policy that would increase the safety of schools and curb violence. The report must be submitted to the chairs of the senate and house of representatives' committees with jurisdiction over education and crime issues.*

This report is based on research the Attorney General's Office conducted from 1995-1997. This included a survey of post-secondary students, personal interviews with campus security directors, and feedback from the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). This research was supplemented by discussions with IACLEA in 1998.

Purpose of this report

Violence in our society is a growing concern for many Minnesotans. Post-secondary institutions are integral parts of our communities and are not immune to issues of violence and crime. Policymakers and security personnel face unique challenges in respect to safety at post-secondary institutions. This report, compiled by the Office of the Attorney General, provides recommendations for actions to reduce violent incidents on post-secondary campuses in Minnesota.

Recommendations

The following are proposed recommendations based on the findings of this report. (Please refer to page **5** for a comprehensive discussion of these recommendations.)

- All post-secondary institutions should implement basic safety measures such as maintenance of campus grounds, regularly patrolled campus routes, escort service, security equipment and crime prevention classes.

- Campus safety officials should involve students in the development of crime prevention initiatives.

- Institutions should provide sexual assault awareness and prevention programs and make victim assistance services available and known to all campus personnel.

- Post-secondary institutions should recognize and address alcohol and drug abuse and its relationship to campus crime.

- Crime reporting procedures should be improved throughout the state.

- Campus and community relations should be maintained and improved.

- The establishment of minimum professional standards for hiring and training of safety and security personnel should be explored by campus security directors, campus administrators, and policy makers in Minnesota.

- Campus safety and security departments and local law enforcement agencies should develop and maintain a comprehensive communication protocol to ensure relevant information regarding safety and security is exchanged.

- Access to criminal, motor vehicle, and other applicable state and federal databases should be available to campus security directors free or low-cost and in a efficient manner so that campus security may respond to personnel, motor vehicle, and other threats in a timely fashion.

Background

This report is based on research the Attorney General's Office conducted from 1995-1997. This includes a survey of post-secondary students, personal interviews with campus security directors, and feedback from the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). This research was supplemented by discussions with IACLEA in 1998.

In 1995, the Attorney General's Office surveyed post-secondary students to measure their perceptions of violence and safety at the institutions they attended. The data collected in 1995 was the basis of the Attorney General's Post-Secondary Safe Schools Report published in 1996. Findings from this survey are used as part of the basis for the recommendations outlined in this report.

To further build on the research begun in 1995, the Attorney General's Office requested that each campus submit their Campus Safety and Security Reports in 1996. The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 mandates post-secondary institutions to compile these campus reports and make them available to students, faculty and staff by September 1 of each year. In addition to reviewing the statistics compiled in each institution's campus security report, conversations took place with the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) for additional insight into campus reporting procedures, unified standards and general improvements for campus safety and security. This data as well as the data collected in 1995 was the basis of the Attorney General's 1997 Post-Secondary Safe Schools Report.

The 1998 report deviated from the tradition of collecting and analyzing data for the Post-Secondary Reports. However, this report provided an opportunity for schools and communities to work on the implementation of one of the recommendations from the 1997 report with support and feedback from the Attorney General's Office, other post-secondary institutions and local law enforcement entities. Security directors from several post-secondary institutions, local law enforcement representatives and the Attorney General's Office met to discuss how to create a communication protocol between campuses and local police to aid in safety and security measures. The results of this meeting were published as the 1998 Post-Secondary Report.

The 1999 Post-Secondary Safe Schools Report includes a broad range of recommendations to improve campus safety and security. The recommendations would draw from past research as well as renewed discussions with IACLEA membership about their most serious concerns hampering safety and security. These include: access to state and federal data bases and the establishment of professional hiring standards for safety and security employees.

Report Summary and Recommendations for 1999

The following recommendations were based on research the Attorney General's Office conducted from 1995-1997 supplemented by personal interviews from campus security directors in 1998. The research included a survey of post-secondary students, personal interviews with campus security directors, and feedback from the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). It is recognized that many post-secondary institutions have implemented fundamental security measures as well as violence prevention programs; however, the Attorney General's Office believes that certain basic safety measures and crime prevention initiatives should be universal in Minnesota post-secondary institutions.

- **All post-secondary institutions should implement the following basic safety and security measures.**

1. The physical characteristics and maintenance of post-secondary campuses should be conducive to a safe environment. Some examples include trimmed shrubbery, adequate lighting and secured residence halls.

2. Campus grounds should be patrolled by security officers at regular intervals.

3. An escort service should be provided for all students, staff and faculty. A 24-hour escort service is ideal, but the service should be based on each campus' specific needs.

4. Campus grounds should be equipped with security equipment such as emergency phones, bluelights, call boxes and surveillance equipment.

5. Campuses should provide crime prevention classes and workshops to students, staff and faculty ranging from awareness education to protection techniques.

- **Campus safety officials should involve students in developing crime prevention initiatives.** Although many institutions involve students in the development of anti-violence programs, these efforts should be continued, expanded, and supported by policymakers. Student input is critical when designing prevention policies and programs. The findings of the Attorney General's Office 1996 Safe Schools Survey for post-secondary institutions showed that the majority (77%) of students at post-secondary institutions felt safe or very safe while they were on their respective campus. However, 28% of the respondents felt "that the amount of effort spent addressing the issues of violence at their institutions has been inadequate." Students should have the opportunity to discuss why they think the amount of effort addressing campus violence is inadequate and what must occur to change their perceptions.

- **Post-secondary institutions should provide sexual assault awareness and prevention programs and make victim assistance programs available to all campus students and**

employees. The 1996 Attorney General's Post-Secondary Safe Schools report found that although many of the respondents did not report being the victims of dating violence or date rape, over half reported knowing someone who had been a victim of dating violence and over 40% reported knowing someone who has been the victim of date rape. Many institutions have programs that address these issues; however, these initiatives need the continued support of campus personnel and law enforcement. Dating violence and date rape are major concerns for post-secondary students.

- **Post-secondary institutions should recognize and address alcohol and drug abuse and its relationship to campus crime.** In addition to the dramatic increase in the number of reported liquor law violations, 39% of the respondents in the Attorney General's 1996 Safe School Survey felt that many of the violent incidents on campus were directly related to drug and alcohol use and 31% of the respondents believed that students commit acts of violence because of heavy drinking. These figures are supported by findings from The Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (1994) at Columbia University. This study found that approximately 90% of all campus rapes involve drinking on the part of the assailant, the victim or both. Alcohol and drug use play major roles in violent incidences on college campuses. Administrators, students and faculty are encouraged to create a climate in which mature, responsible behavior is fostered.

- **Crime reporting procedures should be improved throughout the state.** Although several improvements have been made in recent years, voluntary campus crime reporting standards should be implemented. Information about criminal conduct on college campuses is critical to accurately assess safety and security at post-secondary institutions. For example, the 1996 Attorney General's Safe School Survey found that the most common "violent incident" that students experienced on college campuses was theft. The Campus Security Act, however, does not require institutions to report this crime. Because theft has a significant impact on students, staff, and faculty this is a campus issue that should be addressed. The Minnesota Chapter of IACLEA has begun to develop voluntary reporting standards. This effort is worthwhile and should continue.

- **Campus and community relations should be maintained and improved.** Post-secondary institutions not only consist of students, staff, and faculty but also of their surrounding communities. Campus officials and students should develop and maintain strong relationships with surrounding communities to improve crime awareness and prevention. The Safe Neighborhood program at Winona State is a notable example. This program encourages residents within a three block radius of campus to leave their porch light on as a signal for those in trouble to seek safety.

- **Establishing minimum professional standards for hiring and training of safety and security personnel should be explored by campus security directors, campus administrators, and policy makers in Minnesota.** MN IACLEA has begun this process and their efforts should be supported by campus officials and other law enforcement entities. Presently, there is a wide range of personnel used by campuses to serve security functions.

On one end of the spectrum, some schools use students, who may or may not be in uniform, to provide security services. This practice may present a range of concerns such as appropriate expectations, peer trust, and consistency when providing services. At the other end of the spectrum are those campuses that address safety and security issues by employing non-student safety and security personnel and/or sworn peace officers. It is acknowledged that schools must work within their financial limitations when choosing the type of personnel to employ. However, minimum standards of hiring and training should be established to provide appropriate service from campus security departments. One possibility would be to establish a tier system that would outline specific hiring concerns and mandate training requirements for student workers and more stringent standards for non-student employees providing safety and security services on campus.

- **Campus safety and security departments and local law enforcement agencies should develop and maintain a comprehensive communication protocol to ensure relevant information on safety and security is exchanged.** This will enable both departments to obtain data for annual reports and share security information that may be vital to the safety of students and citizens in the surrounding community.

- **Access to criminal, motor vehicle, and other applicable state and federal databases should be available to campus security directors free or low-cost and in a efficient manner so that campus security may respond to personnel, motor vehicle, and other threats in a timely fashion.** Campus security directors are required to conduct criminal background checks on incoming employees. The more employees that are hired in a year the more costly this practice becomes and as a result other aspects of a security department's budget suffer such as replacing old lighting, trimming bushes, or training employees. In addition, for those institutions that must use private security firms to conduct background checks the wait to receive information back can be significant. In these situations institutions are forced to decide if they will wait to fill a needed position or offer the position on a contingency basis. Either situation can result in wasted resources and compromising the safety and security of students and staff.

Conclusion

Violence on post-secondary campuses remains a serious concern. Each institution has unique restrictions and needs, but there are basic steps that all post-secondary institutions can take to make their campuses safer. Communication between security departments, local law enforcement agencies and post-secondary administrative personnel is important in addition to student involvement in the creation of violence prevention programs.

Although many post-secondary institutions in Minnesota are taking the initiative to fight crime and raise awareness, it is vital that these efforts continue to expand and improve. In addition, policymakers, law enforcement agencies and surrounding communities should support post-secondary institutions' initiatives to prevent crime and violence. Providing a safe and secure environment for students, faculty and staff is a goal that can be achieved and is critical to maintain the tradition of academic excellence in Minnesota.